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AMATEUR HOUSE DECORATION.

By H. B. MATTHEWS.

THE amateur, as well as the professional in the art of house decoration, must of necessity be influenced and actuated by his, or her, work by the consciousness that, to achieve success, there must be an unceasing, unflinching aim after thoroughness of work, knowing that it is only perfect work which secures complete satisfaction, and is able to bear the strictest scrutiny.

"There is no office in this needful world
But dignifies the doer, if done well."

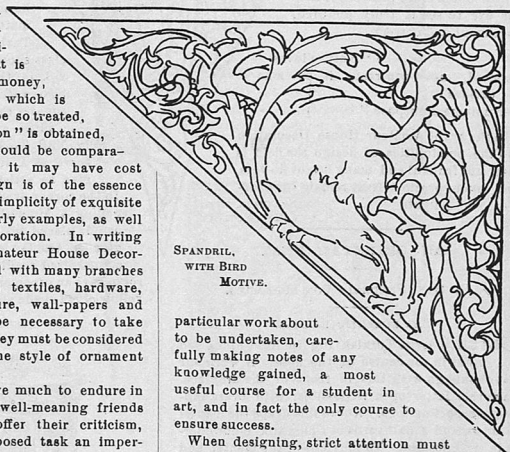
Both must bring alike to their work a true, deep love of art, a cultivated taste, and a loyal regard for fundamental principles. It is the last of these of which I propose to treat, as being essential to the success of those to whom, as amateurs, the study of house decoration is in its incipency. I would at once point out that whilst everyone, whether amateur or professional, has his, or her, own ideas on the subject of decoration—theoretically and practically it is open to each one after paying regard to first principles, which must not be ignored to carry out conscientiously what he, or she, really considers right; thus securing, as a result, individuality, and not unfrequently originality of thought and work. An old adage has remained with me through life, with reference to art, namely: "Please yourself, then some one is pleased," and from experience and observation, I have realized oftentimes the truth of this axiom.

ture of the room, the light available, and other features of an equally important character. Another factor involved is the question of the amount of money to be expended. Professionals, as well as amateurs, are aware of the importance of this element.

Do not, however, allow it to be thought that a vast expenditure of money is essential to good taste. The costliness of decorative work, that is to say an over-expenditure of money, too often spoils the effect which is desired. Decoration should be so treated, that whilst "visible perfection" is obtained, the appearance of wealth should be comparatively hidden, even though it may have cost millions. Simplicity of design is of the essence of good work, the beautiful simplicity of exquisite work. This is shown in all early examples, as well in exterior as in interior decoration. In writing under the heading of "Amateur House Decoration," it is necessary to deal with many branches of the applied arts, such as textiles, hardware, stained glass, tiles, furniture, wall-papers and frescoes. It will therefore be necessary to take each individually, although they must be considered conjointly, and kept in the same style of ornament and in color harmonious.

Amateurs in decoration have much to endure in criticism, especially that of well-meaning friends who too often voluntarily offer their criticism, whilst bringing to the self-imposed task an imper-

The student must therefore arm himself at the earliest stage of his career with this important knowledge, and before undertaking any special work in any special branch, I would urge that he should go to the manufacturers—obtain all possible useful information as to the technical matters affecting any



SPANDRIL,
WITH BIRD
MOTIVE.

particular work about to be undertaken, carefully making notes of any knowledge gained, a most useful course for a student in art, and in fact the only course to ensure success.

When designing, strict attention must be paid to the shapes of panels and other work—the style of ornament must be definitely settled upon, and the notes brought into use. Too much attention cannot be given to these essentials.

Construction and massing, equally in design and color, must be kept in mind in commencing a design, so as to secure an equal distribution of color, and to avoid the cramped and unequal look which many designs convey.

The amateur decorator will more readily see from the illustration given, rather than any verbal explanation, what is meant in composing ornament for panels. Taking, as I have done, a bird by way of illustration, it will be seen that all through the various shapes of panels the possibility of variety of design can be maintained, and it should be remembered that all animals can be treated in the same way, the leading lines being made conformable to the panel throughout, it being also kept in mind that so soon as due regard to the leading lines of composition has been observed, attention may be paid to detail and to "filling up," so as to secure proper spacing and correctness and equality in massing. It is very unusual to find a good designer and colorist combined, design being one thing and color another, each being a separate study. Therefore an amateur when coloring will do well to adopt the following method: Obtain a good color from nature, take a flower, a bird's wing, nay even a mouse, make all the harmonies exactly as found in nature. The reason why monochrome effects in color are so much used is on account of their being so easily handled, thus saving much worry and anxiety in trying to obtain a good color effect.

It is frequently puzzling unless one knows from fundamental principles the reason why a particular panel of ornament looks well or ill. The following



CIRCULAR PANEL, WITH BIRD DECORATION. DESIGNED BY H. B. MATTHEWS.

It should be remembered that in house decoration as in other things "circumstances govern cases;" as for example, the architecture of the house, the size and character of the room, whether drawing or dining-room, library or hall, the furni-

ture knowledge of one essential element, namely a knowledge of the manufacture of the applied arts.

"There are men Who seem to know all things knowable, withal Understand nothing."

points will help to explain: The equal distribution of ornament, proper spacing, and good construction. It is just as ridiculous to see an animal of large proportions represented upon a small scroll,

curtains of embroidered muslin of the same on the inside to complete this French salon.

A MOORISH LIBRARY.

As one enters a library the effect should be cozy

or Turkish embroideries hung on the walls make a rare and artistic room. Have book shelves of oak. They should be four and a half feet high. Drape with silk curtains in front, hung from a brass rod. On the top shelf put bric-à-brac. A Chippendale desk should stand in one corner, with brass trimmings, and bamboo curtains hung at the doors complete this very Oriental and artistic library.

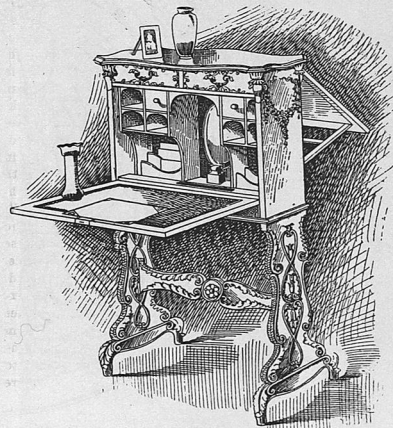
AN ECONOMICAL DINING-ROOM.

Have an Oriental cashmere rug on the floor. A polished mahogany table and chairs are very handsome to have in this room. An old fashioned mahogany sideboard should go with these, with brass handles. One of oak and less expensive is original and artistic, made like the following illustration. This is composed of stand, with drawers and shelf underneath; an ornamented shelf stands on top. Tack bronze colored leather paper to the back of this, and the effect is pretty when plates and cut glass stand against it. Drape mantel with India grass curtains, wound in with terra cotta colored material. These curtains being narrow, are easy to drape in combination with others. Put a pair of them at each window, first hanging bright Japanese Madras ones in the centre, having an India curtain on each side. These Madras curtains have some gilt in them and are handsomer than the old style of Madras. This arrangement requires four pairs of curtains for two windows and is very effective. In one corner have a glass case or cabinet for china. These come now entirely of glass. Stand handsome plates in this and cups hung from the shelves look very ornamental.

Have always a bowl of flowers, if possible, resting on an embroidered centre piece, placed on the polished surface of the dining table; a few flowers at the windows also will make this room always bright and cheerful. Bamboo curtains at the doors in color to match are necessary to complete, if Indian blankets are not used, and an open fireplace, if possible, with brass andirons.

A SIMPLE BEDROOM.

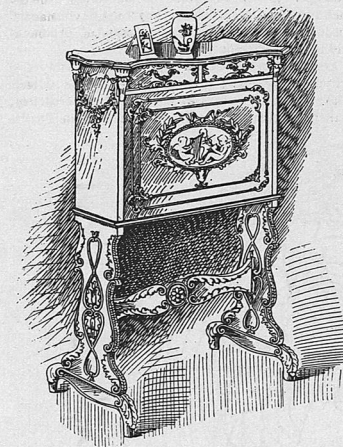
Put a Japanese art square on the floor, in cream and light blue colors. Have a white enamelled iron bedstead, with brass trimmings. Cover this during the day with a muslin spread over light blue. A round bolster instead of pillows should go with this, covered by the same spread. Have a toilet table, painted white or in light ash; drape the mirror of this with white dotted muslin, letting it fall on each side to the floor.



LADIES' WRITING DESK—OPEN.

Have on one side a lounge upholstered in light flowered chintz, with several pillows covered with the same or anything light and pretty. A white fur rug in front of the lounge and a dainty table near

and luxurious. Nothing can give this atmosphere of comfort so well as the soft blending colors and rugs of the Orient. Cover the floor with Turkish rugs of brilliant colors and design. In one corner have a divan two feet wide. This can be made like a plain bench with mattress and covered with a soft Turkish rug. Pillows of different sizes should go with this, covered with silk in Oriental blues and reds, and also with the Turkish embroidered squares that come for pillows. At one side place a Cairo stand with brass tray holding Turkish coffee pot. This can serve as a smoking table as well and will give an artistic finish to the whole room. In the corner over the divan suspend from the ceiling a Moorish lamp of carved brass. A candle placed inside of this when lighted will give an Arabian effect, very picturesque. On a good sized reading table in the centre of the room have an ornamental lamp of wrought iron with yellow china shade and base. An easy reading chair



LADIES' WRITING DESK—CLOSED.

of leather should stand near this. The other chairs can be of rattan with two or more dark wood ones mixed in. Those in colonial style are the most artistic with claw feet. The seat of those should be upholstered with Turkish coverings. Cover the windows with Syrian cotton curtains and drape a Turkish curtain or portière over these, placing one portière at each window only, having it go over the top of the window frame and down on one side. If there is an open grate have brass andirons and drape the mantel with two India cotton tablecloths. These are printed in Oriental colors. The wall above mantel should be draped with a pair of curtains of same material. To carry out this idea of frieze of these goods that come by the yard, and is one foot wide, is handsome to tack on the wall just beneath the ceiling; and other drapings in Japanese

as to have leaves of larger size at the end of a branch of a tree with smaller ones near the trunk. It is not wise to run counter to the laws of nature so as to make it appear ridiculous—how much more pleasing is it to the eye to see it truly pictured, consistent and correct.

"Nature loves

Concord, not contrast, it is man divides

Her universal purpose."

In the art of Amateur House Decoration and the possibilities of design the field is vast and fruitful and many bright flowers, and much precious fruit remain for ornament and delight.

SPANDRILL, WITH BIRD MOTIVE.

AN ORIENTAL FLAT.

By MRS. FREDERIC VON SCHRADER.

AN ECLECTIC PARLOR.

PLACE a large Turkish rug in light blues and pinks in the centre of the floor. A white fur mat should go with this in front of the fireplace. Have this latter open if possible, with brass andirons supporting logs. Above this drape the mantel with two and a half yards of China silk embroidered in gold designs. To the right of the mantel and facing the corner near a window place an upright piano, the back turned toward the room. Drape this back with silk flowered brocade in light colors. It can be hung on a brass rod attached to the piano. A delicate water color picture in a gilt Marie Antoinette frame is artistic to hang on this brocade. Stand a piano lamp on one side of the piano, having a pale yellow shade. On the other side and near the centre of parlor place a little Moorish coffee table in light pink, holding dainty cups and saucers. An alcove with a triangular seat looks pretty placed in the corner; cover with a soft Turkish rug. Have several silk cushions on this and partially conceal the whole by a dainty lace curtain falling from a piece of fretwork above and half draped across the alcove. This fretwork must be white, and its edges can rest on the picture moulding on either wall. Line walls of this alcove with light blue tapestry or silk. One of the new French screens is highly artistic near the fireplace. A more simple one is prettily made of white gilded wood and filled in with flowered silk. It should be four feet high. Drape folding door or archway with Bagdad portière. An original idea is to rip the centre strip out of this and place horizontally over the top of the door, letting the ends fall naturally. Hang a bamboo curtain in light blue and crystal beads in the centre of the doorway and on each side hang the remaining strips of portière from under the piece running across the top. Have chairs in gilt, upholstered in silk brocade, with a Vienna rocker, small size, in ash. A straw settee is stylish, also covered with a white rug and silk cushions on one side of the room. Bagdad portières are pretty at the doors, while a French boule or ornamental table should stand at one side holding a Dresden china lamp. Drape windows with handsome Irish point lace curtains, first putting sash